

# Focus on People

Compiled by Heike Hasenauer

*The Army's cooking team won 22 gold medals, three silver and three bronze.*

**T**HE U.S. Army Culinary Arts Team won first place and was named World Champion in the 2000 International Culinary Olympics.

Known as the "Olympiade der Koche," the event, held in Erfurt, Germany, is the world's oldest and most prestigious cooking competition.

The Army's team, led by **CW2 Travis Smith**, won 28 medals — 22 gold, three silver and three bronze. The team was among 16 military teams and 26 national teams to compete.

The Culinary Olympics began in 1900 and is held every four years. The Army team, formed from soldiers who compete in the Army's annual Quartermaster Center and School culinary competition at Fort Lee, Va., has competed since 1979.

The Culinary Olympics challenges food-service personnel to achieve nationally established standards of excellence in food preparation.

Teams competed in two categories: cold food buffet

and cooking, and judges evaluated their menu preparation, the nutritional value of the food, creativity in preparation and presentation, and originality. — *Fort Eustis Public Affairs Office*



**Culinary Arts Team: World champions.**

**M**ISSOURI Army National Guard **SSG John Viessman** enjoys putting a face on history. For more than 40 years,

he's been doing just that.

One of his favorite pastimes is sitting down with military veterans, recording their memories on tape, and copying and preserving their photographs for history's sake. The interviews can be time-consuming — he has had some last up to four hours — but the end results are detailed accounts and informative displays.

Viessman, a member of the public affairs section of Missouri's State Area Command, collects military uniforms, artifacts and books by the thousands. A former teacher, he's also dabbled in painting, acting and U.S. Civil War re-enacting. Among his other jobs have been tour guide, photographer and journalist, but recording history for others remains his greatest love.

Viessman has always been interested in the military and history. "I started drawing soldiers after we put my father on a train to go off to Fort Hood and then Korea in 1950," he said.

Now a curator at the Missouri State Museum in Jefferson City, Viessman said an interview he did with his father, who reflected on his Korean War experiences, gave him the idea to make a traveling display on Missouri veterans of the Korean War.

After two years, 33 interviews with veterans and traveling thousands of miles across the state, Viessman completed the display, titled "Remembering the Forgotten War: Missourians in Korea 1950-1953." The display was on exhibit in the Missouri State Capitol for several months, then toured the state. The Korean War Veterans Association also has used the display extensively in Missouri.

Viessman has made displays depicting Missouri's involvement in the Mexican War, Civil War, World War I and Korea. Of all these, the Korea display is his favorite. It includes more than 80 photographs of veterans, together with excerpts of interviews with soldiers and airmen. Detailed maps show the four distinct periods of the war.

Viessman created a similar display after interviewing many World War I veterans. One of the Missourians he spoke with was Dan Kennedy, a 100-year-old retired Army colonel who also volunteered for World War II.

Viessman said his next big project will be to interview World War II veterans and create a display on that era. — *Missouri National Guard PAO*

**I**N his spare time, 254th Base Support Battalion **1SG Andrew Chesser** plays quarterback on a Dutch team that includes two other U.S. soldiers, both assigned to Regional Headquarters, Allied Forces, Northern Europe.

The team practices every Monday and Wednesday night, and plays against Dutch civilian teams from the American Football League-Netherlands, Chesser said.

U.S. Army **MAJ Thomas Jordan**, an operations officer for AFNORTH's Northern Regional Signal Group, has been coaching the team for two years.

"I instill in the team the idea that this isn't a happy-go-lucky, beer-drinking party team. This is a football team," Jordan said. "I say: 'If any

**Jordan: Coaching in the Netherlands.**



**Soldiers**

other team works harder than you do, it's my fault.' So we run – a lot. The international players have thanked me for being so hard on them."

Really, it's proven to be a wonderful way for team members to learn about each other's service and country, said Jordan. "Among the 30 players on the team are Germans, Belgians, Dutch and Swedes."

He gets them for about four hours a week, he said, "a limited amount of time, but something I have to accept, given the fact that soldiers are away on TDY and civilians must sometimes work late. They make sacrifices to come out here," Jordan said.

The team's record speaks for itself; undefeated for the first time in 2000.

While the soldiers are staying in shape, Jordan said, the people of Maastricht, where the team practices and plays, understand that we're building something that will last a long time. It's all about international understanding and friendship. — *Heike Hasenauer*

**D**EELY moved by the heroism of the legendary soldiers of the 761st Tank Battalion, **SFC Charles M. King**, a platoon sergeant assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 13th Armor Regiment, at Fort Riley, Kan., has created an art exhibit commemorating the all-black unit, which fought with valor during World War II.

The exhibit was unveiled recently at The Chicago Armory, a military academy in that city, said King, who hopes to establish the art collection as a permanent hall of fame dedicated to the 761st.

King worked on the exhibit for more than two years, creating 10 collages that combine portraits of various 761st members. To create the illustrations, he chose an intricate art technique in which tiny dots of ink are used to form images.

He chose the method, called pointillism, "because soldiers of the 761st deserve the time and attention to detail it took to create each illustration," King said. "I wanted to give them exposure, and to do that I used a technique that I thought would really capture people's attention."

The 761st was activated on April 1, 1942, at Camp Claiborne, La. The unit fought in Europe during World War II and was instrumental in



**King: Army artist.**

turning back German troops during the Battle of the Bulge. The battalion was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation in 1978.

One of the many battalion heroes honored by King's exhibit is SSG Ruben Rivers, who was killed when his tank was hit by enemy fire. In January 1997 Rivers was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

"What inspired me to illustrate him first was that he is the first African-American tanker to receive the Medal of Honor," said King, who is himself black. "He's a symbol of the fighting spirit of the 761st."

King, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, began drawing at the age of six. He received an associate's degree in commercial advertising at Chamberlain Junior College in Boston, and studied art at Western Illinois University and the Art Institute of Chicago. He received a grant from the institute to study painting at the Delaware Water Gap, and later worked as an illustrator at several advertising agencies and newspapers before joining the Army 13 years ago.

During Operation Desert Storm, King destroyed three Iraqi armored vehicles. In 1992 he was deployed with his battalion to Kuwait to serve in Operation Guardian, a security mission. And in 1995 King was deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where he worked with other soldiers assisting Cuban refugees.

Throughout his military career King has illustrated Medal of Honor recipients and other American heroes. A collection of his work was on display at the Pentagon during Black History Month in 1998. His art is also on permanent display at various military facilities, including Fort Knox and Fort Campbell, Ky., and Fort Hood, Texas. — *Fort Riley PAO*

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*Heike Hasenauer*